

### **REMARKS**

1. Claims 1-18 are pending and the others have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 2-5 and 10-13 were rejected under section 112 for a lack of structural limitations. Claims 2-5 and 10-13 have been cancelled.

2. Claims 1-18 were rejected as being obvious over Hope in view of Sarlls. Amended independent claims 1, 8, 16, 17 and 18 now distinguish over this suggested combination and allowance is respectfully requested. When the shuttle of Sarlls begins to close, the dampening chamber has a single fluid flow gap between the lip 51 and the outer periphery of collar 67. (See Sarlls, Column 4, lines 9-28.) The other possible exit for fluid in Sarlls is sealed by the O-ring 39 as it engages the outer periphery 65 of the shuttle. "Even this passage becomes blocked entirely when the shuttle engages seat 39, which occurs just as the collar enters the cage." Column 4, lines 21-24. Unlike Sarlls, the amended claims of the present invention define two fluid flow gaps from the dampening chamber. The first flow gap in the present invention is between the collar and the skirt and the second flow gap is between the first tubular end portion and the inside diameter of the first receptacle. See Fig. 1 of the present application and paragraph 20 of the specification.

These gaps are referred to in the amended claims as both "flow and bleed", because in a shuttle valve, the fluid must first flow into the first dampening chamber as the shuttle disengages from the first valve seat and moves across towards the opposing seat and as travel continues, fluid must bleed from the second or opposing dampening chamber for the valve to seat on the opposing seat. Two flow bleed gaps have proven to be an exceptionally durable design in the commercial embodiment of this invention which is a valuable trait for subsea

control valves that are difficult and expensive to service if they fail. Furthermore, this valve design is being retrofitted in prior valves produced by the assignee of the present application.

In addition, amended claims 1 points out that the length of the skirts in the present invention is longer than the length of the collar. In other words, the skirts completely enclose the collar when the shuttle is in the closed position, as shown in Fig. 1 of the present application. Sarlls does not have this structural arrangement as shown in Fig. 2. In Sarlls, the skirts are shorter than the collar and therefore the collar is not fully enclosed by the skirts when in the closed position of Fig. 2.

These two structural differences distinguish over the suggested combination of Hope and Sarlls. Furthermore, the present invention has been a commercial success, which is a secondary consideration of non-obviousness. See the attached Declaration under 37 CFR 1.132 of Scott J. Senner.

The remaining dependent claims are now believed to be in condition for allowance as they now depend from independent claims which are likewise believed to be in condition for allowance, all of which is respectfully requested.

If any issue regarding the allowability of any of the pending claims in the present application could be readily resolved, or if other action could be taken to further advance this application such as an Examiner's amendment, or if the Examiner should have any questions

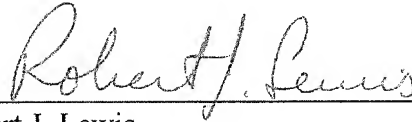
Application of: Thomas B. Thrash, Jr.  
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Amendment A  
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regarding the present amendment, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner please telephone  
Applicant's undersigned attorney in this regard.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

7/31/06

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert J. Lewis", written over a horizontal line.

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